Subject: An observation from GPAF
Posted by Barry Solof on Thu, 05 May 2005 14:09:02 GMT
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There were a lot of different rooms and a lot of different components at the GPAF. Without mentioning vendors or specific gear, some of the components sounded pretty mellow and some of them were pretty aggressive. Yet everytime I asked someone what component (or system) they really liked I got a new answer. Components that just didn't do it for me for one reason or another were somebody elses favorite. Then somebody else would have a completely opposite reaction to the same system.This happened more often than I would have ever expected. Any ideas as to why we all have such different preferences when it comes to audio reproduction? Is this something we have "learned" through extended listening to reproduced music or is there just a lot of variation in everyones hearing?

Subject: Re: An observation from GPAF
Posted by Bill Wassilak on Thu, 05 May 2005 18:32:49 GMT
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It's called psycho-acoustics everybody hear's things different from one person to the next. Just like one speaker system to the next.Preferences are just opionions in my book, some people like more of a layed back kind of sound, some like it sharp and edgey. And as the old saying goes opinions are like assholes everybody has one.Bill W.

Subject: Re: An observation from GPAF
Posted by Norris Wilson on Thu, 05 May 2005 18:49:02 GMT
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Yep, that pretty much covers the dark abyss of the subject.Thanks for putting it in such a simple and direct language, to the point.Norris

Subject: Re: Paragraph one, true, paragraph two.....
Posted by BillEpstein on Thu, 05 May 2005 20:16:10 GMT
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.....I insist it's not opinion if it's objective reality and in the realm of the Five Senses, everyones individual reality is objective reality. We all have 4 taste buds. Mine is more sensitive to salt. This meatball is salty. Yours isn't.The shape of my ears (waddya call the part you can see?) is more,

much more important than the shape of the horn I'm listening to in establishing my reality.And the way MY brain processes sound is even more important. But there is a FINITE set of reality just as their is a FINITE number of audio manufacturer's, Redundancies are cleaned away by the Marketplace.We are all, however extremely subject to peer pressure which is another determinant of individual objective reality. Of course, you ask, if this were true, are there any Subjectivities?

Subject: Re: An observation from GPAF
Posted by Manualblock on Thu, 05 May 2005 20:45:56 GMT
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Your post is a little confusing. Who was it that you consulted that offered these contradictory observations? I ask in order to establish a benchmark for a coherent reply.I offer some short observations from a distance since I did not attend the show.The designers have extensive experience with each piece so naturally their hearing is prepped to that sound. Observers would need at the least to be sure they experienced the equipment in a similar fashion; placement/music/crowds etc.What did you find to be the most glaring or obvious difference of opinion?What were your expectations upon attending the show?Are you discussing opinions that reflect incremental differences or is there a huge gap between what you heard and that of your sources for these discrepencies?These questions attack the root of perception in a show setting and should be addressed before any assumptions of quality are made.While these designs are unique to the designer they are known to be of good and repeatable competence. Speaking to the loudspeakers on display the Iconic's/Dr. Gedde's offering/The Pi's etc. are all based on good engineering and known by reasonable audiophiles to reproduce music very well. While you may prefer one over another they all exhibit excellent sound.So what would you need to hear that would satisfy your personal requirements that you didn't hear?I am not challenging your opinion; this subject interest's me.

Subject: Sharon says "what"?????
Posted by spkrman57 on Thu, 05 May 2005 20:50:36 GMT
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Just what the hell did all that mean?Ron and Sharon and Snowball

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Subject: Re: An observation from GPAF
Posted by Bill Martinelli on Fri, 06 May 2005 00:59:40 GMT
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Cool to go to the shows and see all the different things and notice how the opinions and

perceptions come about isn’t it? It's really quite remarkable. As Mr. Geddes has also mentioned, the speaker is the one part of a system that makes more change than all the other components combined, in my perception. I've been at a show where one group is throwing rose petals at your feet while the group before them is still muttering under their breath how awful things were! It's pretty cool. All,in the eyes (or ears) of the beholderBill

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Subject: Would "live" ever lose in a DBT?
Posted by Dean Kukral on Fri, 06 May 2005 01:38:18 GMT
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If we could give all the people who attended the GPAF a chance to do a DBT of a live concert versus some of the best equipment there, would the live concert ever lose? "I thought A(fine equipment produced by some of our best minds) sounded better than B(the live one)." "The highs sounded better and the lows had real punch. The separation was superior and I could pick individual instruments out without difficulty." "B sounded muddy, with no transparency."

Subject: Re: An observation from GPAF
Posted by Manualblock on Fri, 06 May 2005 02:50:16 GMT
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It seems we lost him.

Subject: Convincing Illusion
Posted by Wayne Parham on Fri, 06 May 2005 02:50:24 GMT
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I have always been of the view that accuracy was paramount, and I still strive for perfection. But one can get too zealous, I suppose, and start debating the number of angels that dance on a pin. I like Siegfried Linkwitz's comments to the effect that the goal is to create a convincing auditory illusion of accuracy. That allows me to maintain my goal of perfection, without becoming self-deceived in the process.

Subject: Yeap, two words.....
Posted by colinhester on Fri, 06 May 2005 03:09:16 GMT
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Ashlee Simpson

Subject: Wo.
Posted by Poindexter on Fri, 06 May 2005 03:16:45 GMT
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I have become accustomed to you doing a job of cheerleading (not an unneeded job, I do not judge) around here, and then you say this. It is an exposition worthy of Joe Roberts (or Chuang Tzu) at his best.Self deception; generally, a thing to be avoided.Audio systems; specifically, self deception at its best.All my brothers who have clicked this far, go back one post and read Wayne's statement again. Read it twice.Aloha, Poinz

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Subject: Re: An observation from GPAF
Posted by Wayne Parham on Fri, 06 May 2005 03:19:35 GMT
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It is an interesting question, isn't it? Same thing with beauty. While we all agree on some "universal absolutes," it is hard to pin down the reasons why we all agree. Some research indicates beauty requires symmetry, and there is evidence that we like certain ratios too. Some have said that we pick up clues from shape and symmetry, ratios that indicate fitness to us. So maybe it's a little bit of a limbic system thing, essentially an emotional response.I think that probably applies to sound too. There are clues we pick up in the sound, and some are universal to all of us. But there are some things that each of us favor a little more than others. We all probably would dislike a grossly distorted signal, but when it gets closer to being accurate, one may prefer a little more bass, another likes a more pronounced midrange, things like that. We as engineers should probably strive to make our equipment as accurate as possible, but the subtle diferences will be what make some men prefer blondes and the others drawn to brunettes.

Subject: Anyone Know A Good Therapist?
Posted by FredT on Fri, 06 May 2005 09:22:50 GMT
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Just an observation about speaker preference differences between the two audio groups I'm active in. The Houston Audio Society members prefer a speaker with low distortion, good detail retreival, and an accurate octave-to-octave tonal balance. The amps we use, tube or solid state, usually are powerful and high efficiency (in the speakers) is not an important goal. I may visit a HAS member's house and hear his $20K system with Innersound electrostats and marvel at the

clarity and resolution. The Lone Star Bottleheads gravitate toward lower power amps, therefore high efficiency speakers are valued. The most frequently seen speakers are single driver speakers, vintage speakers, and multi driver high efficiency speakers. The Bottleheads' speakers have less detail retreival and usually have some peaks in the treble range. At a Bott meeting I may hear a diy single driver speaker with a $10 Radio Shack driver (hooked up to a 2 watt amp) and cringe at the brightness and lack of detail but marvel at the clarity and coherency of the midrange and the soundstage.I have occasionally felt the need for psychotherapy as I move between these groups, but instead of spending my money on an expensive shrink I just buy more speakers of both types.

Subject: Re: Convincing Illusion
Posted by Manualblock on Fri, 06 May 2005 11:15:56 GMT
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Persuint to this thought is one I have just read on the Joelist which says;We accept that buildings and wire and weather etc. all affect the performance of music but we don't allow for the same forces in our reproduction of music. Nice to see this thread rise above the usual sophomoric standard replies we get with these types of discussions.

Subject: Re: An observation from GPAF
Posted by Barry Solof on Fri, 06 May 2005 16:49:00 GMT
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OK, I've re-read my post and it is a bit confusing. Let me try to clear it up a bit.>Who was it that you consulted that offered these contradictory observations? What did you find to be the most glaring or obvious difference of opinion? Just asked folks who where at the show what they'd heard that made them happy. Some folks liked the rooms that had ultra-detailed treble and others like rooms that had mellow treble. Some folks loved bass you could feel and others were happier with bass that wasn't so strong but perhaps a bit more natural. It floored me that there were so many differences of opinion. I'd like room A, somebody else liked room B and another person liked room C. It explains why there are so many pieces of audio equiment and why so many other them sound so different. We all seem to have different taste.>What were your expectations upon attending the show? Wanted to hear high efficiency speakers and low powered amps. The audio folks in my area are into huge amps and low efficiency speakers and GPAF was a chance to hear another side of audio technology.Listening to a lot of equipment got me thinking about the speaker/room and speaker/amp relationships. Clearly some of the speakers were "supersized" in the small rooms. Just as clearly, some of the speakers did better with tubes, some did better with solid state and others didn't seem to care a lot what they got plugged into.It sure was a great learning experience.

Subject: Re: Anyone Know A Good Therapist?
Posted by Barry Solof on Fri, 06 May 2005 16:56:48 GMT
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>> I have occasionally felt the need for psychotherapy as I move between these groups, but instead of spending my money on an expensive shrink I just buy more speakers of both types.Very well said, Fred. I think we all just need more speakers.Many thanks for the hospitality at the show.

Subject: Re: Anyone Know A Good Therapist?
Posted by Manualblock on Fri, 06 May 2005 17:22:03 GMT
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Therapy by definition restores emotional equilibrium. How can one entire group prefer one type of sound? Is it indoctrination? I love the way some posters leave a post that is obviously intended to cause some controversy then disappear when they are called to explain. Not you Fred you're a reasonable guy; but I notice the attention seeking behaviour occurs frequently on audio forums; that is the personality trait that requires therapy.

Subject: Re: An observation from GPAF
Posted by Manualblock on Fri, 06 May 2005 17:30:56 GMT
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That makes sense. I have avoided shows for that reason; it just isn't possible to provide proper listening conditions. But what I got out of your post was that you seemed to feel there was some conscious bias involved. Was that right; I mean it's certainly possible that people tend to develope some personal agenda and defend it as a matter of course despite what they really are hearing. That is what I suspect and your post brought that out which is why I enjoyed reading it.Any chance you had that possibility in mind?

Subject: Re: Anyone Know A Good Therapist?
Posted by akhilesh on Fri, 06 May 2005 18:53:46 GMT
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That's 2 extremes you've touched on, Fred! It's fun to listen to both types, expcet I get to hear very few $20K setups. -akhilesh

Subject: Re: An observation from GPAF
Posted by Barry Solof on Fri, 06 May 2005 20:01:18 GMT
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You have brought up a good point.The different preferences might have been conscious bias (or an agenda). I don't know. Bias (and its evil twin politics) wasn't something I had considered from the people who where not exhibiting.It makes sense that a speaker builder/seller would be biased. How could they not be? If they go to the trouble of building a speaker it only follows they will build one that is pleasing to their own taste. For example, Wayne often excuses himself from making observations about other folks gear because he knows he'd appear biased. It is a given that a vendor would be biased towards their own creation. No news there.But you are right, there could be a great deal of bias for the folks who just came to listen. Admittedly, the premise of the audio show in small hotel rooms may be seriously flawed but it still is a way to get exposed to a lot of different equipment.

Subject: Re: An observation from GPAF
Posted by Duke on Fri, 06 May 2005 20:59:43 GMT
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Very thought-provoking post, Barry. If I may offer a few rambles that may (or may not) apply...Ever notice how it's mostly us guys who get so deep into the music? My theory is that, for many of us, music is where we go to feel emotions that otherwise, for whatever reason, are "off limits" for us. When I really, really listen to music, it's more with my heart than with my head. But I have found that the more deeply I hear into a performance, the more I deeply can feel it. This could become a long tangent, so I'll try to get back on track now.To me, a speaker must do two things. First, it must do something so well, so magically, that I can suspend disbelief and escape into the illusion. That something can be imaging, coherence, natural timbre, natural and/or pleasing tonal balance, richness & ambience, bass "slam", inner detail & nuance, dynamic impact, whatever. But it has to do something very, very well. Now just what qualities have our highest priority on depends on our individual taste, listening style, experiences and expectations, degree and type of hearing loss, and limitations imposed by our environment. The other thing that a loudspeaker must do is less obvious, but perhaps just as important. That is, it must not introduce colorations or inadequacies severe enough to distract us and spoil the illusion. Here is where I think the variation from one individual to another is the greatest - that is, I think there is enormous variation in our tolerance level for different inadequacies. For example, I'm fairly forgiving of less than perfect bass or poor imaging or limited dynamics, but have a very low tolerance for boxiness or upper midrange/lower treble overemphasis or long-term listening fatigue. I can think of quite a few speakers that have abundant "magical" qualities, and for me it is the relative absence of glitches that ruin the illusion that would be the deciding factor between them. So I would speculate that the widely differing opinions you observed among GPAF attendees has not only to do with our individual likes, but perhaps ever more with our individual dislikes. I say this because, for me at least, the deciding factor between Speaker A and Speaker B is often the relative absence of aberrations that collapse the illusion and sever my emotional connection to the music. Duke

Subject: Re: An observation from GPAF
Posted by Manualblock on Sat, 07 May 2005 00:47:00 GMT
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Thanks for pursuing this because I have had a suspicion for some time that there is a political component to the discussion that; while hidden, influences all of this debate.Simply put; if an individual is surrounded by a viewpoint they would tend to adopt that viewpoint until at some junction their ability to be subjectively neutral is co-opted.You participate in a group that favors SE amps and Efficient speakers thereby that is what you are exposed to and that is what you by definition decide is correct. The folks you hang with agree and validate your position. You are rewarded emotionally by participation and the positive feedback from the members of your group.You adopt a set of theories or perform a set of measurements geared to promote the tenets of your beliefs that serves to award the appearence of a technical legitimacy to your value system.Over time your hearing adjusts to satisfy the need to fulfill this philosophy and reap the emotional windfall of approval from those of the group.Now you are armed and ready to defend this structure; and as such will refuse to consider whatever is not in keeping with this belief system since that would invalidate the purpose of this creation.Your hearing is now captive to the point of view and subliminally you will promote your position regardless of or maybe your not even able to distinguish from another equally valid position.Hearing will defy measured response results and measured response results will disagree with hearing. Or you will take sides due to an absolute inability to process material not in step with the point of view.Science guys will insist they listen first only to confirm the measurements; already knowing in advance from long practice what methods will produce what results.Listeners without competent science backgrounds will deny the ability of measured results to adjust for independant organic analysis.Mediators will provide for quasi-technical explanations that seek to create false congruencies between the two camps.All-in all the music preferences will define which system works best with each venue; or type of recording and that will be the false proofs cited by each camp picking recordings that flatter that assemblage of equipment.Too much bandwidth but I really want to thank you for using reason to point out the discrepencies at the show; I really think your post is the crux of audio definitions and it is the first I have read to quantify and expose this whole argument. I hope you choose to follow this up. Thanks J.R.

Subject: Re: Wo.
Posted by Manualblock on Sun, 08 May 2005 00:12:03 GMT
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I read once "Don't expect the recording of a Steinway Grand piano to sound any better on your stereo in your room than having the real thing would in there." All recordings are a minitureization of the event.

Subject: Re: An observation from GPAF

Posted by Barry Solof on Sun, 08 May 2005 22:18:05 GMT
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Wow. Let me try to take a bite out of all you have said.>The folks you hang with agree and validate your position. You are rewarded emotionally by participation and the positive feedback from the members of your group. This is true of audio (as well as many other beliefs in life) and it has a couple of sides to it. You may become a believer of the cause (triodes, transistors, vinyl, mp3's) because you meet a group of folks that believe that cause. You talk with them and like them and eventually absorb their philosopy as your own. Alternatively, you may hang with that group because you already believe and are looking for people to help justify your beliefs. This isn't just an "audio" thing since it happens in politics, too.>Over time your hearing adjusts to satisfy the need to fulfill this philosophy and reap the emotional windfall of approval from those of the group. Perhaps. I've met audio zealots that could only listen to a certain type of equipment. But most folks at the show didn't seem to be that way. For example, there were a lot of positive reactions to Dr. Geddes speaker even though it was being demo'd with a solid state amp. It sure wasn't what a SET crowd would expect.If everything was tied to a belief system as strongly as you have implied the set/high efficiency crowd would have snubbed the speaker. This clearly did not happen. It wasn't always each listeners favorite speaker but everyone seemed rather pleased with it overall and always ranked it highly.There were horn guys heaping a lot of praise on the FredArrays, too. If there were really an "agenda" then Fred's babies would have been snubbed by the horn guys. It just didn't happen that way.Fred's post on the differences in his audio clubs sort of hit close to home. One group spending freely on one type of technology and another group taking a completely different road. Neither of them right and neither wrong (and Fred seems to like them both).>Science guys listen first only to confirm the measurements.>Listeners without science backgrounds will deny the ability of measured results to adjust for independant organic analysis.>Mediators will provide for quasi-technical explanations that seek to create false congruencies between the two camps. This is the ultimate chichen/egg issue in audio. Is the science more important than listening? We could argue that for generations and still not have the right answer.Ultimately, the human ear is what decides on the product to purchase. If the product was designed strictly by scientific method, strictly by human evaluation, or by both doesn't much matter. If it make you happy enough when you listen you'll buy it. To paraphrase Duke Ellington: If it sounds good then it is good.>All-in all the music preferences will define which system works best with each venue; or type of recording and that will be the false proofs cited by each camp picking recordings that flatter that assemblage of equipment. This works both ways, too. Certain gear does favor different types of music. A friend has a system that handles certain types of music particulary well. Guess what? Those are the types he listens to most of the time. My system does particulary well with my favorite styles. If a system could do every type of music well (as it would in a perfect world) then there would be no need for such silliness. Until then, we buy gear that suits our personal music preferences.>Too much bandwidth but I really want to thank you for using reason to point out the discrepencies at the showI still don't think of them as discrepenies (even after our lengthy diatribe). It just seems that folks really do hear things a lot differently or have different sets of priorities for the flaws they will accept. Trying to figure out why each of us likes particular things would be as difficult as figuring out why some people like Kenny G. and others want to do him bodily harm.There was a lot of nice gear at the show and most of it was not expensive compared to much of what is offered in the retail shops. It was a great learning experience.Wow. Now I've eaten too much bandwidth...

Subject: I don't know maybe???
Posted by Robert Hamel on Tue, 10 May 2005 16:19:34 GMT
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I was just at the the Stereophille Show in Manhattan and while we were looking around they had a room with piano music being played. I was like WOW!!! That's the best speakers I have heard it sounds like the real thing. As I got to the door I was amazed that it was the real thing!!! They had piano guy playing the piano. I didn't expect it at all and could not see inside the room until I got to the door. I still can't explain how I "KNEW" it was real. The reaction was instinctive, something about the sound tipped my senses off. That said I wouldn't be too quick to think you can be fooled.